

Nye Ffarrabas: Truth IS A Verb!

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Nye Ffarrabas, the 92-year-old artist of the exhibit *Truth IS A Verb!*, is an individual who has never lost her sense of wonder. As part of the extraordinarily innovative Fluxus movement in the early and mid 1960s Ffarrabas participated in exhibits at the famous Judson Gallery at the Judson Memorial Church in New York with Yoko Ono, Claes Oldenberg, John Cage, John Lennon and her ex-husband, Geoff Hendricks and many others.

Formerly Bici Forbes Hendricks, Nye changed her name to Ffarrabas which is the Scottish equivalent of the surname “Forbes,” and adopted Nye (of Welsh origin) which means Golden. This seems like a true Fluxus decision which encouraged the view that life and art were inseparable. Despite her role in early Fluxus events, this is her first solo museum exhibit.

In this exhibit, Mark Waskow, curator and director of the Northern New England Museum of Contemporary Art (NNEMoCA), has chosen to focus on Ffarrabas’s work related to her founding the Black Thumb Press in 1965, as well as text-based sculptural works. In *Mirage Oasis Mirage 1973–2019* Ffarrabas picked up around thirty packs of crumpled Camel Straight packs and made a mandala-like scene with a desert at the center in a unique



Chair #6: We The People, 2008, found object with mixed media. Photo: Erin Jenkins/Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

expression of addiction and smoking.

Chair #6: We The People features a period piece wooden toilet with the cover raised and parts of the US Constitution pasted on various surfaces. The basin at the heart of the structure has swirling text—Geneva Convention, Writ of Habeas Corpus, The Bill of Rights, The Rule of Law—a wry comment on the evisceration of the Constitution that seems quite relevant today.

A brilliant piece, *Punctuation Poems*, published by Black Thumb Press in 1966, features 20 pieces, each one more fascinating than the next. A block like pattern is created on a typewriter by using only one key. This accompanies a display of Black Thumb Press mailing cards between Fluxus artists (1965–68), one with a note from Yoko Ono.

Ffarrabas’s work shows an endless fascination with life at every level from the personal to the political. Her sense of mirth and perseverance in living her art is really inspirational. —*B. Amore*

See: *Art Talk: Nye Ffarrabas and Mark Waskow; Brattleboro Museum and Art Center; YouTube May 8, 2025.*